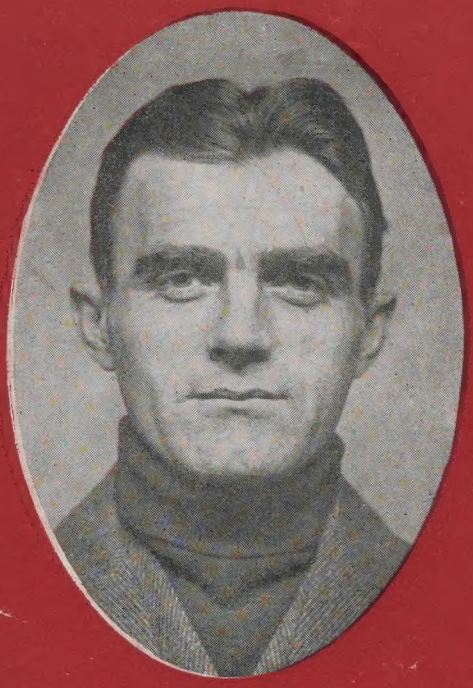
John Krafchenko

THE CANADIAN OUTLAW



A Detailed Story of his Capture, the Sensational Escape and Recapture, with the Events that led up to the Crime at Plum Coulee.

By BEN ROLPH

Who was forced at the point of a gun to hide him for six days from the Winnipeg Police.

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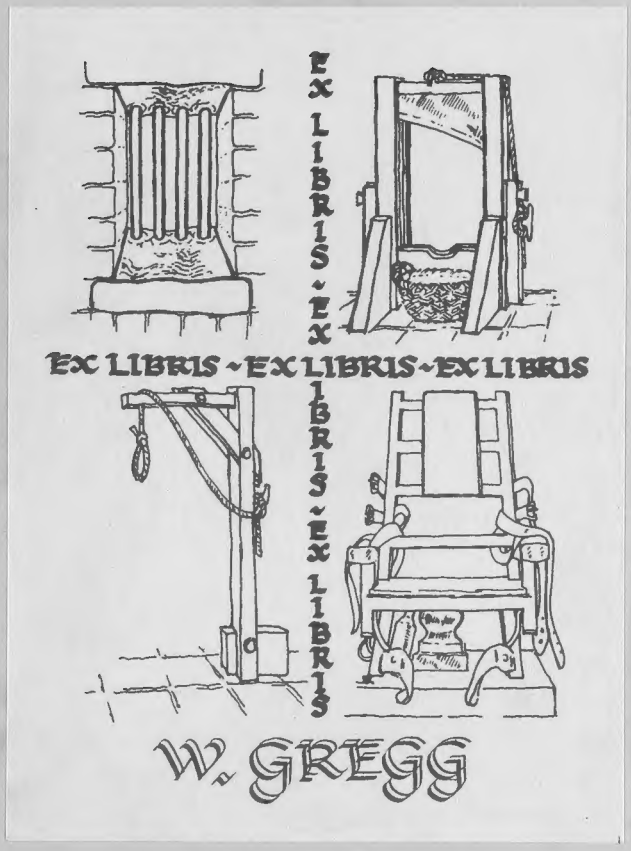
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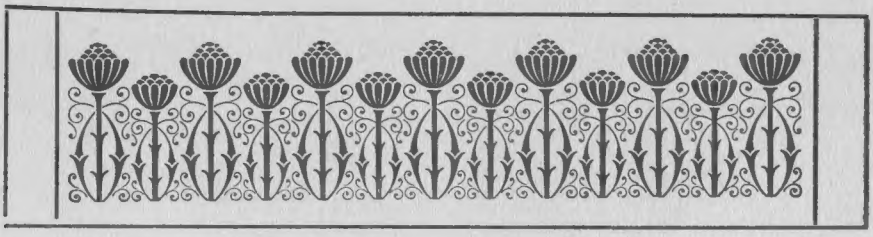

INTRODUCTION

In all the criminal history of Western Canada and Winnipeg, or for that mattter of the whole of Canada, there has never been another case of such vivid dramatic interest as that of John Krafchenko. After a long criminal career, full of exciting and sensational exploits, Krafchenko, a man well known to the police of the whole West, wound up his series of depredations by robbing the Bank of Montreal at Plum Coulee and shooting down the manager, Henry M. Arnold.

The crime was committed on December 3rd, 1913, and stirred Manitoba and the whole of Canada to a high pitch of excitement. The crime had so many sensational features that it became the absorbing topic of discussion. The murderer, a man in black, had been whisked away in a waiting automobile. Suspense was keen until William Dyck, a Plum Coulee livery man, who drove the flight car, returned and told a story of being forced to drive two bandits away. Suspicion was at once directed toward the well known desperado, John Krafchenko, for he had lived as a boy at Plum Coulee and he had been seen in the village shortly before the crime. Dyck's story, however, did not at first seem to sustain this suspicion. Later Dyck, while under detention at Winnipeg, confessed that he had been shielding Krafchenko through fear of his life.

But if the murder was sensational, the fact that John Krafchenko eluded capture for a week, while all the police in Winnipeg and Manitoba were looking for him, was even more sensational. During this tense interval, the public of Winnipeg and the province talked and speculated on nothing else but Krafchenko. I was one of the two men who knew where he was during that time. We were both under threat of losing our lives if we gave the fugitive away, and I will always remember those nerve-wracking days. In this book I give detailed information as to what I passed through when, through fear of John Krafchenko's wicked gun, I shielded him from capture.

I also give in this book many other details of the exciting occurrences which John Krafchenko's fatal bullet, which he fired at Plum Coulee on December 3rd, 1913, set in motion.

CONTENTS

Page

Introduction .....

Chapter I—A Scene in Winnipeg's Underworld..... 5

Chapter II—How I Met John Krafchenko..... 9

Chapter III—How I Learned it was Krafchenko..... 13

Chapter IV—Driving Krafchenko to Plum Coulee..... 17

Chapter V—Getting the Password..... 21

Chapter VI—The Coming of Reigie..... 23

Chapter VII—The Robbery and Murder at Plum Coulee..... 25

Chapter VIII—Krafchenko's Capture: How it was Accomplished.. 31

Chapter IX—Committed for Trial..... 43

Chapter X—Krafchenko's Escape..... 44

Chapter XI—Second Capture of Krafchenko..... 48

Chapter XII—Krafchenko Sentenced to Death..... 51

CHAPTER I.

A SCENE IN WINNIPEG'S UNDERWORLD

On August 3rd, 1913, I bought a second-hand Overland automobile and, after giving it a thorough overhauling, I secured a livery license and made arrangements with Mr. A. N. McDonald, proprietor of the Club Hotel, to stand my car in front of his premises on Main Street. It proved to be a good stand, and I worked up quite a satisfactory livery trade.

During the month of October, Winnipeg was terrorized by a gang of desperadoes who were carrying on their nefarious work throughout the city and its suburbs. Safes were forced open with dynamite and their contents taken away by the thieves; pedestrians were held up and robbed of their valuables and money; outlying stores also received considerable attention from the gang. The desperadoes managed to escape capture by the city police, and one job followed another at intervals of a week or ten days, till the arrest of John Krafchenko, a daring criminal, known throughout Manitoba

and the Northwest as a "bad man." He was taken by Chief of Detectives Stodgill at a notorious resort in East Kildonan after "shooting up the house" with a brace of automatics of the latest design.

When arrested he was in an intoxicated condition, lying on a bed with both guns beside him. When questioned by Chief McPherson, of the Winnipeg police force, Krafchenko disclaimed ownership of the pistols. It could not be proved that they were his, as they were not actually in his possession at the time he was taken into custody.

Krafchenko, being an excellent liar and a most persuasive man, convinced Chief McPherson that he had just got on a bit of a spree and was living straight. He claimed to be working at his trade as a machinist and the chief eventually allowed him to go.

A few days later the resort where Krafchenko had been arrested was entered during the evening by three masked men. The visitors and inmates were held up at the point of revolvers and robbed. The perpetrators of this hold-up were never caught. It is claimed they got several hundred dollars in cash and jewelry on that occasion. It was whispered around the underworld that Krafchenko was the leader of the trio.

It was Flo Williams' fancy little cottage in East Kildonan, a suburb of Winnipeg, that was entered by the three masked men with drawn revolvers. The pianist was playing the latest tango; girls were dancing and some were sitting on their friends' knees; two or three taxi-drivers were sitting down by themselves talking shop and not

paying much attention to the general revelry, being used to this make-believe enjoyment.

What followed was done quickly, women were standing still with wide staring eyes, terror reigned supreme.

"Hands up everybody!" barked one of the three men. Everybody stood around looking concerned with their hands held high.

The next order was from the leader: "Back against the wall everybody!" There was a shuffling of frightened people, hurrying to do as they were ordered. One man gamer than the others, and known in Winnipeg as a hard man in a fight, rushed one of the hold-up men. He was quickly backed by a Swede. If these two men had been supported by the others they might have turned the tables, but nobody moved to help them. Both were struck from behind and dropped unconscious to the floor. Some of the women were screaming and were ordered to shut up. Everyone was completely cowed by what had just happened. One of the outlaws quickly collected pocket books and jewelry of every description. The desperadoes slowly backed out of the doors, with their steady guns pointed at their victims. Once outside, they disappeared in the bush and were never caught for this piece of work.

I merely write the account of this hold-up, gathered from scraps of information that I picked up occasionally from folks of the so-called underworld, to let the reader of this book know what is really going on in our hustling city. As a taxi driver for three months I have seen some off-color things in little old Winnipeg. I want to say here that some very good fellows I know are taxi

drivers; in fact, one or two that I know are just in from the farm. I would like to give a little bit of advice to those one or two, drawn from actual experience. That advice is to go right back to the farm or get another job.

It is claimed that Krafchenko held the place up for spite, to get even with the owner for his arrest.

CHAPTER II.

HOW I MET JOHN KRAFCHENKO

On the evening of November 17th I was waiting around the lobby of the Club Hotel to pick up a load when an old but quite active man called me to one side and asked me if I was the taxi driver. I replied in the affirmative. The old man invited me to have a cigar with him, which I agreed to do. He next asked me if I knew Bert Bell. I had known Bell for over twenty years, and I told him so. After asking me my name, he seemed to be satisfied, and said he knew a party that wanted a car for two or three days to make a trip in the country, but this party wanted somebody that would keep the affair quiet and not talk too much. The man, he said, would pay well if he could get a man that could be depended upon.

I asked him if there was anything shady connected with the trip, and told him that I did not care to have any dealings with anything that might get me in wrong with the police. He assured me that there would be nothing at all that could possibly get me into any trouble; but it was very important that I should not tell anyone about the trip.

Not knowing that I was going to run into some of the most startling experiences in my career, I agreed to meet this party, and asked the old fellow when I could do so.

He said, "Right away; he lives about two blocks from here. I'll introduce you if you will come over."

Getting in my car we drove over to a rooming house on George Street.

The old man led the way up a flight of stairs to an ordinary furnished room. There were two men here, who evidently expected us. One of them was introduced to me as Thomson. He was of medium size, with blonde hair and sharp features. The old man then made me acquainted with the other man, introducing him as Jack Ryan. We shook hands. I had never seen him before, but I knew, somehow, that I was shaking hands with John Krafchenko, one of the cleverest desperadoes in Western Canada. He acknowledged the introduction in a quiet, well-bred manner, that immediately put me at ease.

Krafchenko was a man of striking appearance, with strong, prominent features. He had a large head with neatly trimmed, smooth, black hair. His eyes of steel grey, with just a hint of green, that looked out from under heavy dark brows, would remind you of a lynx, if you had ever seen that animal. His voice, pitched rather low, had a peculiar magnetic quality that has persuaded more than one man to do things they would never have attempted had they stopped to consider the consequences. Not quite as tall as the average man, he was better proportioned, with powerful shoulders. He had a good record as an athlete and was at one time a professional wrestler. He was also known to be a clever machinist and an adept locksmith.

We immediately started to discuss the object of my visit. Krafchenko informed me that I had been recommended to him by

Bert Bell, who told him that I owned the car that I was driving and he thought I would be willing to make a trip of any kind if it would pay me.

After being assured that my car was in good condition, Krafchenko said, "I want to go about eighty miles south of Winnipeg, and I expect to be gone for about three days."

I asked him where he intended to go. He said he did not care to mention the name of the place just yet, but that I need not be afraid.

"Nothing will happen to get you in wrong," said Krafchenko. "There is a 'plant' out there; I am going to raise it."

In the language of yeggdom, "plant" means something of value that has been hidden or cached away. Krafchenko offered me fifteen dollars a day, with all expenses. I knew that I could not make forty-five dollars clear of expenses in the city. And not being in business for my health, I told him I would drive him any place he cared to go as long as he was not going to pull off any criminal stunts.

He assured me that I need not fear anything of that nature, and he also told me that he knew the section of the province where he intended to go thoroughly.

I agreed to be ready to start at seven o'clock on Wednesday morning. This particular Wednesday happened to be my birthday, the 19th of November. Two weeks later I had good cause to thank my lucky stars that the Bank of Montreal in Plum Coulee happened to be closed on the afternoon of that particular birthday.

After assuring him that I would get everything ready for the

trip, Krafchenko asked me to call for him that same evening at the Moose Club on Pacific Avenue, and he would get me to drive him and Thomson to a resort in East Kildonan, about four miles from the city.

I told him to call me at the Club Hotel, giving him my phone number, when he was ready. I then shook hands all round and left, going back to the hotel.

It was a quiet evening, and there was not much doing around the hotel, so I waited around the lobby and received a call from Krafchenko about an hour later. I called at the Moose Club and from there I drove Krafchenko and Thomson to the above-mentioned resort.

CHAPTER III.

HOW I LEARNED IT WAS KRAFCHENKO

This place is situated about four miles east of Winnipeg on the Birds' Hill Road.

Arriving at Flo Williams we all went up to the house together. Jack rapped on the door. A rough voice demanded to know who was there, and ordered Jack to hold his face close to the window in the storm door. Jack stood close to the window and a match was struck on the inside. The person with the rough voice seemed to be satisfied and let us in, but this man, a big fellow, in his shirt sleeves, and, I judge, he was intoxicated, had no sooner closed the door behind us than he faced Krafchenko and roared out at the top of his voice, "So you're Jack Krafchenko! You're the guy that's going to shoot me full of holes. Well, go ahead and shoot. Hurry up, shoot!"

Krafchenko merely smiled at him, called him by name and told him he didn't want to shoot him.

"I just want to talk to you, that's all," said Jack; "keep still for a minute or two."

I noticed that the big fellow had a black jack swinging from his right hand—a dangerous weapon—but I saw both Krafchenko's hands were in his overcoat pockets, and I guess the big fellow noticed it too, for he never came close enough to strike. About this time I went out to look at my engine. The big fellow tried to stop me,

but Krafchenko stepped in front of him and in a tone of voice that compels action he told the big fellow to sit down. The big fellow sat down.

Jack said: "Attend to your engine, driver, it's all right. Come back in when you are through."

I went outside and started my engine, trying to make up my mind whether to go back to town or not. The noise had subsided inside, so I thought I would stay and see it through. The big fellow opened the door to let me in. He seemed to be in an entirely different humor, and invited us all to have a drink. Thomson offered me a cigarette. He had sat down and had lit one when we went in at first, never saying very much the whole time. We all had several drinks, while Jack and the big fellow were quietly talking in one of the side rooms. There was only one woman in the house that night. The place had been quiet for some time, so Thomson told me. She seemed not to mind the row very much, and the big fellow kept her pretty busy carrying drinks.

While waiting for Krafchenko to finish his business there, I realized that my first suspicions were correct. It was Krafchenko all right. I had heard the big fellow call him by that name. There must have been bad blood between them, but they seemed to be the best of friends before we left. This big fellow afterwards told the police that Krafchenko had shown him a plan of the town of Plum Coulee, and that he intended to rob the Bank of Montreal there.

On the drive into town, Krafchenko asked me to call at the room on George Street at seven o'clock the next evening, and we would go over the arrangements for the trip. He also told me to

meet Bert Bell and ask him to come over with me. I told him I would. After paying me for the trip, he and Thomson got out of the car on Higgins Avenue in front of the Canadian Pacific station.

The next evening I drove down to Bell's place and told him Krafchenko wanted to see him that evening. Bell seemed rather surprised, and told me to make some kind of an excuse. He said he did not want to get tangled up with that party, so I let it go at that, and met Krafchenko without him. He did not seem to be put out much when I told him Bell did not care to come with me. Krafchenko said: "It's all right; I don't need him."

During our conversation that evening I caught Krafchenko studying me closely several times. He noticed it, and told me that he could generally size a man up in an hour's talk. He always accompanied such remarks with a quiet smile that took the embarrassment out of a situation.

After being assured that my car was in good shape, he told me to take along about five gallons of gasoline and plenty of oil. He knew a great deal about automobiles, and I judged that he had used them before. He wanted to know, especially, if my tires were good. I told him not to worry on that score, for I had just equipped my car with an entire new set.

After talking with him and the other two men, the old fellow and Thomson, who were both there when I called, for about an hour, I left. Before going out I agreed to meet Krafchenko with everything ready, in front of the Manitoba Hotel, across Main Street from the City Hall.

That same evening Krafchenko came into the Club Hotel and

asked Mr. McDonald if he knew of a car which he could hire for a country trip. Mr. McDonald called me over to where they were talking, and Krafchenko made arrangements with me, over again, for the trip. He told me a few minutes later, while we were talking alone, that he spoke to the proprietor of the hotel so that I could see for myself that he did not wish to get me into any trouble. I could never quite figure out why Krafchenko did that, but I presume that he thought I might give up the trip, and he wanted to show me that he had no intention of getting me in trouble and was himself anxious to start in the morning.

I registered at the hotel that night, after getting my supplies for the trip. Leaving a call, I was up at fifteen minutes past six the next morning. I had breakfast and, while waiting for seven o'clock, I remembered that it was my birthday, November 19th. I had promised my mother to be home for dinner that day, but when driving livery you are never sure about meal hours.

CHAPTER IV.

DRIVING KRAFCHENKO TO PLUM COULEE

The weather did not look very promising on the morning of November 19th. It was rather cold and there was a thin film of snow on the ground. I knew this would make driving in the country rather difficult.

At seven o'clock I pulled up in front of the Manitoba Hotel. Krafchenko was not in sight. I waited for some time and still he did not show up. I was beginning to think he had given up the trip, in fact I was hoping he had. I did not like the idea of being caught out in the country with bad weather, and besides there was a certain mystery about the whole thing that I did not like. However, I thought I would drive around to George Street, and let him know I was ready. I met him just as I was turning into Martha Street on leaving Logan Avenue. He said that he had taken longer to get ready than he had expected. He directed me to drive to a house on Martha Street, where we would get others.

This was the first intimation I had of any one going with us, but I said nothing. We picked up Thomson and the old fellow.

They climbed into the car, carrying a grip and what I thought was a single-barreled shot gun; I found out later that it was a high-powered rifle.

Krafchenko told me to drive through Fort Rouge and out Pembina Highway, and go through Morris, which is forty miles south of Winnipeg. In Fort Rouge we stopped long enough for Thomson to get a bag of lunch.

I drove south on the Pembina road. The going was bad on account of the light fall of snow. I was busy watching the road

most of the time till we arrived in Morris. During this part of the trip Krafchenko and Thomson were engaged in conversation most of the time. The old fellow joined in occasionally. He sat in front with me and dozed most of the time, with his face buried in the fur collar of his coat.

A little before we pulled into Morris, the weather cleared up, and it got warmer. This seemed to cheer everybody up considerably. Krafchenko told me to stop about a block after passing the hotel and sent Thomson back to get a bottle of whisky. We had a good, stiff drink all round. It didn't go so bad after forty miles in the cold morning air. From here Krafchenko directed me on a road about half a mile south of the town. We drove west on this road from time to time. After this he would direct me on different roads, always in a south and west direction. Krafchenko seemed to know the best roads, and had an excellent knowledge of the country, naming the different farms and places.

Krafchenko was pleased with the way my car was running, and remarked that he wanted to get to this place by noon, but we ran into two or three bad pieces of road that shook my car up and compelled me to run slowly for about an hour. One of my spark plugs began to miss. Krafchenko noticed it and said, "We will stop just before we get in and tighten it up."

After I had driven about six hours, Krafchenko pointed to a town ahead of us about seven miles and said: "That's the place."

About two o'clock in the afternoon we stopped a mile from this town. Here I tightened up the plug that was giving trouble.

They all got out here, while I was working at the engine, and stretched their limbs. I soon had everything ready to go on. Krafchenko told me to fill my tank up with gasoline, which I did, from the extra five gallons that I had brought along. After I had

done this they all got back in the car and I drove toward the town. Just on the outskirts Krafchenko showed me a road running west and parallel with the main street, and told me to stop by a church on this road.

I drove opposite the church and stopped. Here Krafchenko held a short conversation with the other two and then told me to drive about half a mile west and he would show me the road we were to take after leaving here. I thought this was rather queer and unnecessary, but I did as he said and he pointed out a good road leading to the north through an open piece of country dotted here and there with farm houses. Then he told me to go back to the church and turn my car facing west, which I did. Here Thomson and the old fellow got out and taking the grip, which they had brought along, went up town.

Krafchenko stayed in the car with the rifle resting across his knees and talking with me about the surrounding country. He did not act suspiciously in any way, and when I got out to take another turn on my plug, he simply said, "Don't take it out because we are going to leave here right away."

So I got back into the car. Just then we saw the other two coming back to the car. They stood against the car and talked for a minute or so. I didn't hear what they said. My engine was running and I couldn't catch their remarks, but I heard Krafchenko, who was in the back seat, say: "I think I'll go up myself."

But he seemed to change his mind, for they both got in, and Krafchenko said: "I guess we'll go back to Winnipeg, Benny."

I said: "All right."

He told me to drive out the road he had shown me. He said: "That will take us back to Morris, and we will have supper there."

That didn't sound so bad to me. I was getting hungry—seventy

miles of driving raises a pretty good appetite in November. After driving about a mile I turned around in my seat and asked them what town that was. The man, introduced to me as Thomson, said it was Plum Coulee.

After driving about six miles north, Krafchenko directed me to take a road running east. This road was in perfect condition, and led into Morris, where we all had supper.

We left at 5.25 p.m. for Winnipeg and reached the asphalt on the Pembina road at 7.25 p.m., two hours flat. We had all had several drinks and were feeling pretty gay when we arrived in the city.

Krafchenko got out at the corner of Assiniboine Avenue and Main Street and Thomson and the old fellow left the car at Martha and Alexander. I drove up to the hotel at just about eight o'clock in the evening. I didn't know then that these men had meant to rob the Bank of Montreal at Plum Coulee, and that they intended to force me at the point of a gun to drive them in their getaway. I realized this after putting two and two together from later developments.

There wasn't much doing around the hotel that evening. Krafchenko's two friends came in about 9.30 and, after buying a couple of rounds at the bar, left, saying they were pretty tired out on account of the drive and were going to bed.

At 11.30 I drove some friends of Mr. McDonald's to their home in the west end of the city. I went right home after this trip and left the car back of my home on Portage Avenue, going into the house at just five minutes to twelve. My mother had supper set for me and seemed disappointed that I hadn't got home for my birthday dinner, but she was glad to hear that I had had a fairly good day. She was quite used to me coming in at all hours.

CHAPTER V.

GETTING THE PASSWORD

Krafchenko called me up two days later and asked me to meet him with the car at the corner of Selkirk Avenue and Salter Street. This was in the evening and from there I drove him to one of the questionable resorts near Transcona. He stayed there about an hour, buying a few drinks. I did not see much of him while there. I was discussing an anti-freezing solution for automobiles with a driver who was waiting for his party. We were busy talking when Krafchenko came from another room and said he was ready to go back to town. On the way back to the city I told him that I was afraid the police were watching me; that I had seen two or three detectives around the hotel.

Krafchenko said: "Don't worry about me, Benny; they have got nothing on me now, and I don't intend to do anything just now."

I told him that I didn't mind driving him, that his money looked as good as anybody else's, as long as he didn't ask me to drive when there was anything crooked liable to happen. He laughingly assured me that he wouldn't.

Before we reached town he said: "I am going to tell you something, Benny, and you must keep it to yourself. It's a pass word I use with a few 'good people.' The next time I call you by telephone, I will say, 'This is your friend from New York,' and if you answer, 'I'm from Gibraltar,' I'll know that it's you. In case I might mistake someone else for you, I like to be careful, and there is no chance of a mistake that way." After cautioning me to be sure and not repeat it to any one, he got out of the car on Higgins Avenue, near the C.P.R. station. This was about nine o'clock in the evening, and I drove over to the hotel to wait around for another load.

On the following Monday, at about half-past eleven, I happened to be home early this evening, Detectives Headon and Bole came to

my house and told me that they wanted to see me at the police station. I went down with them and was questioned about my trips during the last week. They wanted to know exactly where I was on the evening of the nineteenth. I told them that I had driven all day on a shooting trip to Plum Coulee and arrived at the Club Hotel at eight o'clock, and hadn't moved out of there till eleven thirty. They told me I was mistaken, that I had driven Krafchenko and some of his friends to a suite on Assiniboine Avenue and had waited till they had robbed the occupants and had driven them over to St. Boniface. I knew the police were just trying a bluff. I assured them that I hadn't driven Krafchenko after eight o'clock that evening, or at any other time within the last week. I didn't want to get mixed up in any trouble and told them that the last time I had seen Krafchenko was two weeks ago. I told them that I could prove to their satisfaction that I had not left the Club Hotel on the evening of the nineteenth.

They brought two men out of the cells. I immediately recognized Thomson and the old fellow whom I had driven to Plum Coulee with Krafchenko. I was asked if I had ever driven either of them and if I knew them. I answered that I had had a drink with both of them on the nineteenth about nine o'clock, but that I had never driven either of them. My reason for denying that I had driven them was that I did not want to get into any police scrapes. The police did not seem to be very well satisfied, but nevertheless told me to go home.

The next evening Krafchenko called me up, using the pass word, and asked me to meet him at Furby and Sargent Streets, which I did, and drove him over to St. Boniface and back again. On the Winnipeg ride I told him what had transpired at the police station, and that I did not think it would pay me to drive him after this, as I knew the detectives were watching my movements. He told me that he was going to leave the city that night, not saying which way he was going, and that he might write me. He remarked that he didn't know what the other two might tell the authorities, and that he thought it would be better for him to "blow," as he put it. That was the last I saw of Krafchenko till after the bank robbery and murder at Plum Coulee.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMING OF REIGIE

On the Saturday or Monday previous to this sad affair, I was met by William Reigie at the Club Hotel (I did not know his name until after Krafchenko's arrest). He told me that he had a letter for me and after taking a look at the number plate on my car he gave it to me, waiting till I had read it. I was surprised to see that it was from Krafchenko. He informed me that if I could prove that I knew him, to this party, that he had another and more important letter. I was wondering how I was going to prove this, when I happened to think of the pass word that Krafchenko had used while telephoning. So I said to Reigie: "This must be from our old friend from Gibraltar." He answered: "Yes, it's from him," and handed me another letter.

Krafchenko asked me in this letter to bring my car out to Plum Coulee on Monday and meet him there. He stated that Reigie would drive out with me and that he would pay me well for the trip. He did not say why he wanted the car. I tore both letters up, and asked Reigie why Jack wanted me to go to Plum Coulee, but he did not seem to know. Reigie said if I would go he would hire my car to take on a cattle buying trip through the country. I asked Reigie if that was the real reason. He told me it was not, but that he had hired a car for that purpose before.

I drew the inference from Reigie's conversation that there was something shady about the proposition, and I told him plainly that

I wanted nothing more to do with Jack Krafchenko, and that he could tell him that my car was not in shape for a trip in the country, also to tell him that I did not want any more dealings with him. I told Reigie that the police had been asking me too many questions. He seemed rather put out at my answer, and asked me to write Jack and tell him, which I did. In the letter I explained to Krafchenko that I preferred to have nothing to do with any more of his trips.

During my conversation with Reigie, I learned that Krafchenko had been raised around Plum Coulee, and was both liked and feared among the Mennonites around that district. Reigie left for Plum Coulee on Tuesday, December 2nd, and delivered my letter to Krafchenko there.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROBBERY AND MURDER AT PLUM COULEE

Wednesday, December 3rd—the day of the murder—I had a call from Jimmys Hotel, on McDermot Avenue. On going there I picked up a load for Deer Lodge. The people I was driving that afternoon were prominent business men bent on seeing the sights. They spent their time, between drinks, viewing the sights at the road house and teasing the bear. I left there with my party at about a quarter to six, and left them at Jimmys Hotel at a quarter past six. Driving back to the Club Hotel I was dumbfounded to hear that the manager of the Bank of Montreal at Plum Coulee had been murdered and the bank robbed.

Everyone in the house was reading the papers, and groups of people were discussing the outrage committed. I immediately got a paper and read the account. Krafchenko was suspected. He had been seen in Plum Coulee the previous day. He had even told one of the bank clerks, with whom he was acquainted, that if the bank was ever robbed it would be done during business hours, as the time lock in the safe was too hard a proposition.

To say that I was glad I had refused to meet Krafchenko in Plum Coulee, as he requested in the letter Reigie brought in to me at the Club Hotel, would be putting it mildly? I was glad that I was through with him, as I thought. I knew now that Krafchenko was an unscrupulous dare-devil, who would use any one, regardless of consequences to them, to aid him in his nefarious acts. I knew by the way the crime had been committed that he was a fool playing for notoriety.

His staying around the town for a week, his showing himself to people who had known him from boyhood and who knew him then to be a "bad man," his open joke to one of the bank clerks that a robbery, if it ever happened, would be a "day-light job," were all

foolhardy preliminaries to the crime of the gravest nature in his home town. It must look to those who followed the case in the newspapers that Krafchenko was the crudest kind of a bad man. His previous escapades had shown some daring and considerable cunning, but this last dastardly crime savored of the boy who had read too many dime novels and wanted to do something daring and let everybody know it was Krafchenko that did it, believing that he was shrewd enough to outwit the police and get away. But the unlooked for happened. The shot he fired killed Mr. Arnold, and to my mind, from what I have read of Krafchenko, I don't think he meant to shoot with fatal result. But it would not have been a real bank robbery if he hadn't fired off his gun. And then he might have meant to instill fear in the citizens. It is well known that he was a good marksman with a pistol. But if his knowledge of anatomy had been as accurate as his aim, Mr. Arnold would not have been killed.

Krafchenko has posed as a doctor several times, but he didn't know that the steel jacketed bullet after entering the soft part of the shoulder was going to swerve from the shoulder blade and lodge in the vertebrae, severing the spinal nerve and causing death instantly.

This is the unexpected thing that happened, and terrorized Krafchenko. This is what made him force people in Winnipeg at the point of a gun with threats of death if they did not hide him from the police and help him to get out of the country. Krafchenko was more of a desperado for the six days that he was hiding from the police before his capture on College Avenue than ever he was before in his whole career.

His planning of the robbery showed crudeness and poor judgment. When he went to Plum Coulee, a little over a week before the crime, he stayed at William Reigie's house, about three miles from the town. While there he laid his plans. It was in Reigie's house he wrote the two letters that Reigie brought in to me. Krafchenko

told him that he owned my car and that I would come out to meet him any time. Reigie delivered my answer to him Tuesday evening, December 2nd, in Plum Coulee.

Reigie told me later, while talking to him in Winnipeg, that Krafchenko cursed me roundly, and threatened to fix me later, when he read my refusal to meet him in Plum Coulee with the car.

After leaving William Reigie that evening, about seven o'clock, Krafchenko stopped William Dyck back of the Commercial Hotel, and calling him into the alley showed him an automatic pistol by flashing a light on it from a pocket searchlight.

He commanded Dyck to have his automobile ready next day at noon, waiting in front of his livery barn with the engine running. Krafchenko told Dyck that a friend of his was in trouble with the police, and he was to drive this man out of town at 12.30 sharp. Dyck, knowing Krafchenko's reputation, promised that he would. Krafchenko told him the party would look like an "old Jew," and would walk down the lane to Dyck's barn, which is on the corner of the alley, and would get into the car and tell him where to drive. After threatening Dyck, with the words: "I'll get you if you don't; I'll be across the street to watch you," he left for William Reigie's house.

William Dyck is the proprietor of a livery stable in Plum Coulee, and does considerable business driving drummers to Morden and other towns to make train connections. He has recently added a large Case automobile to his equipment. Knowing and fearing Krafchenko he thought it would be best to comply with the desperado's demands.

At noon on Wednesday, December 3rd, the citizens of the little village were enjoying their noonday meal. The streets were nearly deserted, except for a few farmers, and one or two children who were playing around the front of the bank building.

About twelve-thirty a man was seen walking down the main street towards the bank. He wore a fur-lined overcoat, a soft hat

pulled far down over his eyes and was fully bearded. Arriving at the bank he hurriedly walked inside and, covering Mr. Arnold, who was alone, with a heavy automatic pistol, he ordered him to hold up his hands. Mr. Arnold, startled beyond description, complied with the desperado's order. He immediately went behind the railing to the safe, covering Mr. Arnold all the time, and threatening to shoot if he made a noise. He pulled the bundles of bills out of the drawers and put them in his overcoat pockets. After filling his pockets he backed out with two or three packages in one hand and the gun in the other, covering Mr. Arnold all the time. At the door he turned and ran down the side street toward the alley behind the bank. About twenty feet from the building he dropped a package of the money. Turning to recover it, he saw Mr. Arnold following him. When Mr. Arnold saw the desperado turn to recover the dropped package he shouted at him to stop. The bandit immediately raised his pistol and fired, killing the ill-starred banker instantly. He calmly picked up the package of bills and hurried down the lane. Here he jumped into William Dyck's car and, at the point of his gun, ordered Dyck to drive east and out of town, emphasizing his order with a shot through the covering of the car.

Dyck, not knowing what had happened, was terrified by the actions of his passenger and got his car moving at once. He proceeded in an easterly direction out of town.

Meanwhile people up town hurried to the scene. Word that the bank was robbed and the manager murdered, raced through the quiet little town. Calls to the police in Winnipeg and the surrounding towns were quickly telegraphed, and soon all southern Manitoba was notified of the crime. People from all directions hurried into Plum Coulee, carrying weapons of all kinds. Automobiles and motorcycles, loaded with people, were soon scouring the country for a trace of the bandit, who was forcing Dyck to drive him at top speed towards Winnipeg.

Two or three miles from Plum Coulee the bandit removed his

false beard, and Dyck immediately recognized his passenger as John Krafchenko.

Between Plum Coulee and McTavish, Krafchenko ordered Dyck to stop and get out of the car. When he had complied with his orders he told him to walk away from the car. After Dyck had done this Krafchenko removed the overcoat that he was wearing and carried it into the bush at the side of the road, hiding it there, where it was discovered later by the police and was used as a damaging piece of evidence against him at his trial.

Getting back into the car again he ordered Dyck to get in also and drive on towards McTavish.

During the drive Krafchenko was counting the money and arranging the bills into packages, at the same time threatening Dyck with his gun to make speed. He remarked several times aloud that he hoped he hadn't killed Mr. Arnold.

Occasionally Krafchenko would look back along the road to see if he was followed. Arriving about two miles west of Osborne Krafchenko told Dyck to stop. The bandit also told Dyck there was a lot of silver in the car that he could have. Krafchenko said: "I'm going to leave you now, and I want you to tell them back there that there were two of us, and I want you to say the other fellow was a tall blonde man with a brown suit. Be sure you do it or I will certainly get you."

Dyck promised to tell the police as Krafchenko directed, but he refused to accept the money. Krafchenko then picked up a handful of the silver and put it in Dyck's overcoat pocket, and going to the hood of the car he said he would put the spark plugs out of business. But Dyck begged him not to do this, saying he would drive back slowly. Krafchenko changed his mind and left the engine in running order. After threatening Dyck again to get him if he didn't tell the authorities the story of the two men, he started to walk northward towards Winnipeg.

Dyck, thinking himself lucky to be alive, started back to Plum

Coulee, stopping only once on the way to telephone a message to his wife, letting her know that he was safe and would be back home as soon as his car could get him there.

Arriving in Plum Coulee he was immediately taken in charge by the provincial police, but fearing Krafchenko's vengeance, he told the police of being forced to drive two men, and giving a description of them as Krafchenko had told him. On being asked about the other he described him as of medium height and dark. The newspaper reports of the crime all contained the two-man story. The next day, after getting his nerve, Dyck braced up and told the police the real facts of meeting Krafchenko back of the hotel and how the latter had threatened him. He told how it was he agreed to have his car in waiting, and how after Krafchenko had removed the false beard, he had recognized the bandit. Dyck told how Krafchenko had made him agree to tell the false story. This story of Dyck's was never made public till he gave his evidence at the preliminary hearing in Winnipeg after Krafchenko's capture by the city police.

Twenty-four hours after the crime had been committed all southern Manitoba was being searched for the fugitive. By this time the police had a definite clue to work on. Descriptions of Krafchenko were flashed all over the province, and in fact the whole Dominion. Every entrance into Winnipeg was watched. Constables of both city and provincial police forces were searching the city. The provincial government had posted a reward of one thousand dollars for Krafchenko's capture. The Winnipeg papers were giving descriptions of the desperado along with his previous record. He was written up as a desperado of the worst sort, cunning and resourceful, one who would not hesitate to use his guns to resist capture. The police were working hard to find him, doing double duty, running down every rumor, only to be disappointed. These rumors were many and kept the officers busy. It was a nerve racking hunt, and the police deserve credit for landing Krafchenko just one week after the murder.

CHAPTER VIII.

KRAFCHENKO'S CAPTURE: HOW IT WAS ACCOMPLISHED

On Thursday evening, about seven o'clock, I received a telephone call to pick a party up at the corner of Sherbrooke and William Avenue. Driving up William Avenue, going west towards Sherbrooke, I was stopped just before I got to Kate Street by a man stepping out in front of my car and motioning to me to halt. He was muffled up heavily and had stepped out of a dark spot and I did not recognize him until he had got into the back seat. He greeted me with: "Hello, Benny."

I knew him then. It was Krafchenko apparently unconcerned. I told him that he was doing a very foolish thing to get in my car. "Oh, that's all right, Benny. I just want you to drive me to some place where I can have a talk with you. You'd better drive down in the north end, some place."

Knowing that the police were after this man and that he would be desperate, I decided it was best to humor him and, besides, his right hand never left his coat pocket. I knew there was a gun there and I didn't want to get a hole drilled through me. So I started west on William. Krafchenko directed me to turn north on Kate Street, down Elgin to Isabel, and then to the overhead bridge crossing the C.P.R. yards. He told me to cross this bridge and cautioned me to drive carefully. I took it that he did not want me to be stopped for violating any traffic rules. After crossing the bridge he directed me to drive to Main Street and then north. I kept going till I reached the city limits. Fearing that he intended to force me to drive him out of the city, I told him that I did not

have much gasoline. He smiled and said: "We will not go far, Benny. You can turn west on one of these quiet streets and we'll have a talk."

I felt considerably relieved, and after going north a couple of blocks farther, I turned up one of the streets just outside the city limits and stopped my car two or three blocks from Main Street.

On turning around in my seat, after shutting the switch and stopping my engine, I was looking right into an automatic revolver and a determined wolfish looking face behind it. It's hard to remember what I thought those few seconds, but using what nerve I had left, I told him to put that thing back in his pocket. To my surprise he did, and said: "Now, Benny, you know what I can do with that. You've got to help me get away, and if you don't I'll get you, and if I don't the other fellows will; I have plenty of friends. I want you to do a few things for me, and you must keep your mouth shut about it."

I said: "All right; just tell me what you want."

I was willing to promise anything to get away from him.

"Well, Benny, the first thing I want you to do is to plant this stuff."

I said: "You don't mean to say you have the money with you."

I knew that he would not want me to "plant" anything else.

"Of course I've got it here. You have got to put it away till I want it," he replied. Here he drew two bundles out of the left hand pocket of his overcoat. One was an oblong package, which he put under the front seat of the auto, and handing me a smaller bundle, he said: "There's nearly a thousand dollars in this one. You take five hundred for yourself and I'll write you what to do with the rest. I'll send Bert Bell for the other bundle. Besides that, I want you to get me a whole outfit of new clothes, something different from what I have. You can buy me an overcoat like yours."

I was wearing a heavy black coat with a fur collar at the time.

I promised to get him one just like mine. Next he told me to buy a forty-one suit of clothes, a seven and one-eighth cap and a good pair of size seven shoes. I promised to get everything he wanted, and then he told me to take it all to Bell's place and he would get the things there. He said: "Tell Bell that I will fix him good if he don't help me, and tell him to come out William Avenue and meet me with you to-morrow evening at seven o'clock sharp at the same place where you met me to-night. I agreed to do everything he asked me, but I told him that I did not care to be seen spending any of the money.

He seemed to think so too, and pulling a handful of bills from his trouser pocket, he said: "Here's some money that is all right. This is not Montreal Bank bills. You may be watched, so be careful and, remember, Benny, don't give me away. I mean business, and they will never take me."

After looking around carefully, to see if we had been noticed by any one, he told me to drive him back to William Avenue. On the way back he warned me to be very careful, again telling me to mention to no one that I had seen him, also to put the money in a good place, and be sure and have the clothes the next evening and have Bell meet him.

Arriving on William Avenue, where I had picked him up, he got out of my car. Bidding me good night, he walked hurriedly away. I immediately drove to my home and put the money away, scarcely taking time to examine it. But I saw there was one package of tens, one of fives and a package of ones in the bundle that I took from under the front seat where he had placed it. The smaller package contained only tens, and looked to be about a thousand dollars, but I found on counting it later that it contained only seven hundred and forty dollars. All the money he had given me was in Bank of Montreal bills, with the exception of the package of ones and the money that I was to buy his clothes with, which I found on counting was seventy-two dollars.

After putting the money away, I drove down town again, stopping in front of the Club Hotel, trying to appear as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

I may have appeared calm, but I know that I was the most excited man in Winnipeg that night. I had met the desperado Krafchenko, I had the money or part of it that had been taken from the Bank of Montreal in Plum Coulee, I had promised under a threat to aid a red handed outlaw to escape justice. I reasoned it out, that if I went to the police and told them what I knew, they might lock me up and Krafchenko would get away. I did not know but that some of Krafchenko's confederates might be watching my movements. I felt that I was between two fires, and I could not come to a conclusion on what action to take.

With all the police in the province looking for Krafchenko, I felt that they would spare no one whose information would lead to his arrest, and I expected him to deal with me just as he had threatened to do if the police attempted his capture and should fail to arrest him.

I was still undecided what to do when I went home that night, and I guess it is hardly necessary for me to say here that I didn't sleep a wink. The next morning, Friday, December 5th, I drove to Eaton's store on Portage Avenue and bought the clothes for Krafchenko and, taking them down to Bell's place, I told him a friend would call for these parcels and that I wanted him to come to the hotel with me, that I had something very important to tell him. He got in the car with me, and we drove to the Club, where I explained what had happened. Bell at first would not have anything to do with it, but after I had argued about an hour with him, telling him what Krafchenko had threatened to do, he agreed to meet him.

At this time Krafchenko was openly accused by the papers and the Manitoba government had offered a reward of one thousand dollars for his capture. I argued with Bell that we had better help him till he got out of the city or was located where he could do us no harm.

We both had the same opinion that Krafchenko, being desperate, would not hesitate to carry out his threats if we failed to help him. Bell left the hotel, saying he would meet me there at half-past six in the evening, which he did. During the day I had noticed several detectives around the house, and I knew the police suspected me and were watching my movements. They knew that I had driven Krafchenko on one or two trips, several weeks before. Not feeling like taking a chance, I asked Bell to walk out and meet Krafchenko on William Avenue and try to get rid of him as soon as possible, which he did; but he had only been gone about twenty minutes when I was called to the telephone. On answering it Krafchenko's voice at the other end informed me that a friend from New York wanted to speak to me. I knew he was asking for the pass word, so I answered that I was from Gibraltar, and to go ahead. He asked me why I didn't meet him with the car. I told him that Bell walked out and asked him if he hadn't met him. He said he had not. I told him I would be there in about ten minutes. He said he would be waiting, so I jumped in the car and drove out to meet him. On the way out I watched to see if I was followed, and not seeing anyone, I drove straight out William Avenue. But I was shadowed just the same. I found out less than a week later that the police had every move I made that week down in black and white, with time and dates. If any one thinks the Winnipeg police are not up to the minute, all they have to do is to get in "Dutch," they will soon find out that in Winnipeg they are as fast as the best. Some of the cleverest crooks in North America have been booked in this city.

Just before I got to Kate Street I saw Bell. He told me he hadn't seen Krafchenko, and got in the car with me. I drove west about a block and saw Krafchenko cross the street, standing in the shadow of some trees. I stopped and he walked over to the car and climbed in the back seat, shaking hands with Bell. He told me to drive to the foot of the overhead bridge. On the way he and Bell

were engaged in conversation, to which I did not pay much attention, being bent on getting him to his destination as soon as possible. Arriving there, he and Bell got out, and I drove back to the hotel.

About eleven o'clock the same evening I went to Bell's rooms to learn what they had planned. As I was going up the stairs in the block where he lived, some one tapped me on the shoulder. I hadn't heard anyone behind me, and turned with a start.

Krafchenko was standing a foot from me and smiling quietly. He said: "Tell Bert to meet me at the other place. I think they are next to me on William Avenue."

After saying this he went down the stairs and out onto Main Street. It was such acts that showed the daring of the man. With the whole police force looking for him he had taken a chance on Main Street to get that message to Bell. I knew that he had been watching the block to see how Bell was going to act. I felt that he would carry out his threat if we didn't do as he directed.

I noticed that he was then wearing the clothes I had purchased for him. When I left Krafchenko and Bell at the foot of the overhead bridge on Logan Avenue they had gone up to Bell's rooms and there Krafchenko had changed.

Bell would not believe me at first when I told him that I had seen Krafchenko on the stairs. It was only after I gave him the message about the meeting place that he was convinced.

Bell was very nervous, and told me that he wished he had kept out of it altogether. He told me that Krafchenko meant Pritchard Avenue when he spoke about the other place. Bell told me that after leaving me they had crossed the overhead bridge and walked down to his rooms and there Krafchenko had changed his clothes and then they had both walked to the river where Krafchenko had some money buried. This he gave to Bell, and later he changed his mind and took it back. Leaving the river they both walked to William Avenue. Here Krafchenko gave Bell one of his pistols, telling him to keep it for him. Bell protested, but Krafchenko put

it in his pocket. Bell showed me the gun, which was a small automatic about six inches in length of foreign make. After giving Bell the gun, he warned him to go straight home, which he did. Shortly after this I arrived, and we both came to the conclusion that Krafchenko had followed him from William Avenue to see what he would do.

We both agreed that the best thing for both of us to do would be to get him out of town as soon as possible. I could see the strain was telling on Bell. I was very nervous myself, feeling that something was liable to happen at any minute and that we would not be able to make the police believe that we were forced into aiding Krafchenko.

After leaving Bell's rooms I went home. The next morning, Saturday, the 6th, I met Bell at the Club Hotel. He told me that Krafchenko had called at his rooms at seven o'clock that morning, after walking the streets all night, and had greatly enjoyed the breakfast Bell had given him. He had made an appointment to meet him at three o'clock on Pritchard Avenue that afternoon. I could see that Bell was very nervous. He told me if Krafchenko did not get out soon that he would drop him altogether and let him do the best he could alone. By this time the strain was beginning to tell on us. Bell told me he could not eat or sleep from thinking what was liable to happen. I told him he had nothing on me in that respect. I could not get my mind off the events of the last two days for a minute. Naturally, Bell and I would talk to other people around the hotel and about the murder and robbery, listening to the different opinions and discussions. Krafchenko and his probable whereabouts was the general topic all over the city.

Bell came to see me again the same day at six o'clock, and told me Krafchenko had a room on College Avenue, and had rented the whole upstairs. Krafchenko intended to disguise himself as a woman and leave the city. He also told me that Krafchenko had told him to get the large package of money from me and take it to

him. During the day the radiator on my car had frozen up, and I had put it in the garage to have the leaks caused by the freezing repaired. I did not feel like carrying the money through the streets, and I told Bell that I couldn't give it to him till next day. Bell told me Krafchenko might suspect something was wrong, and that I had better come with him and see him. I did not feel like going. It appeared too much like taking unnecessary chances, but nevertheless I went to the house on College Avenue, in company with Bell, that evening about 8.30.

I met Bell at his rooms about eight o'clock and we both left his place for the house on College Avenue. As soon as we left Main Street I noticed that we were followed. I immediately told Bell. He proposed that we double back for a couple of blocks and give our shadower the slip, in which we were successful. After doing this we went straight to the house. Bell had been there in the afternoon and knew the location. Strange to say neither of us ever thought to look at the number, we being too excited. Arriving there we walked right upstairs to Krafchenko's rooms. Krafchenko had told the landlady that he was a student at St. John's College and expected two of his class mates in a few days. He gave that as his reason for renting the two extra rooms, and thus having the whole upstairs to himself. Krafchenko showed his ingenuity here by taking down the furnished room sign, which was tacked up on the front of the house, and destroying it. His landlady, having rented all the rooms in the house, did not bother to get another one. His idea in doing this was in case the police might start a systematic search of the rooming houses in the city.

Krafchenko appeared very glad to see me, and said it was best that I had not tried to carry the money through the street. We finally agreed that Bell should come up to my house the following day and get it from me there. Krafchenko seemed to be comfortable and quite at home in his new quarters. He was well supplied with newspapers, and some of the theories regarding his latest job

appeared to amuse him. He noticed that Bell and I were quite nervous and he joshed us about it, telling us not to worry too much, that he expected to be gone in a couple of days. He seemed to be well prepared to resist arrest. He showed us two guns under his pillow and there was another on the dresser. When he went out, which he did occasionally, he always had a pistol in both pockets of his overcoat. He told us that he would not hesitate a second to use them if he was pushed.

On Sunday, the following day, Bell called at my home and I gave him the large bundle of money, which he took down to Krafchenko, who counted it out, and giving Bell eight hundred dollars and a letter to his wife in Graham, Ontario, told him to find some way to get the money and the letter to her. He also gave Bell a map of part of Graham, showing the location of the house where she lived. This money, with the letter and the map, Bell hid in St. James, and later turned it over to the chief of police.

Bell and I met every day to discuss ways and means of getting Krafchenko out of the city. I could see that the strain was telling on him as well as myself. Krafchenko did not seem very anxious to make a break to leave the city, and Bell and I, thinking of ourselves, were on the point of dropping him altogether, but fearing him we would always agree to help him another day. Bell was in touch with him every day.

Tuesday, December 9th, Mr. McDonald asked me if I knew anything about Krafchenko. I told him no; that I had not seen him for over three weeks.

Mr. McDonald said: "I'm afraid you are going to get into trouble. There have been detectives here asking me about you every day."

That same evening Mr. McDonald told me there was a warrant out for my arrest and he wanted me to go to see the chief of police with him. I told him I would be glad to tell them all I knew

concerning Krafchenko, but that I hadn't seen him since the affair in Plum Coulee.

So I went with him and was surprised when he said we would meet the chief in the McIntyre Block. I asked him why we did not go to the police station, and he told me we were going to meet Chief McPherson and ex-Chief McRae in the latter's office. I thought that was rather queer.

When we went ex-Chief McRae shook hands with me, remarking that it was a long time since we had met, and he hoped that I did not hold any ill feeling about a difference we had had about seven years before. I had applied for a license to sell cigars and tobacco and for some reason Chief McRae had turned me down. I fought the case and finally sold cigars and tobacco for six months with the license. Chief McRae at that time refused to tell the market, license and relief committee why he would not give me the necessary permit.

After shaking hands with me, he introduced me to Chief McPherson. We all sat down, and for three hours I evaded question after question even after Chief McPherson had shown me that every movement I had made during the last week was recorded.

My reason for refusing to tell was that I did not care to give information to outsiders.

I told Chief McPherson that I would like to talk to him privately, and he and I left the McIntyre Block. Outside I told him how Krafchenko had threatened Bell and me, and had forced us to help him. He seemed to know Krafchenko's methods, for he said: "I knew that was just about the way he would act."

The chief asked me for the number of the house on College Avenue, but I could not tell him. I had not noticed what it was the night I went there. The chief wanted me to take him to the house, but I told him that I did not know the location, which was the truth. I had not paid much attention to the district, leaving it to Bell to take me there after dark.

I told Chief McPherson that I would go to Bell and get the number. We finally agreed that this would be the best plan. I was told not to tell Bell what had happened, but to get the number of the house from him, so I went to Bell's rooms and told him I wanted to see Krafchenko, and asked him for the number of his rooming house. Bell said he did not know the number and that I had better not try to go around there at this time of night, which was about eleven o'clock. He told me that he had an appointment with Krafchenko at ten o'clock the next morning, and that he would meet me at the hotel at eight. We talked about getting him out of the city, for a while, and I returned to Chief McPherson and told him the result of the interview. He said that we would wait till the morning, when Bell would be followed to the house. The block that Bell lived in on north Main Street was watched all that night and his movements in the morning were followed by detectives.

I slept in the hotel that night. Knowing that I was under surveillance I did not go home. Bell kept his appointment with me and wanted to know the message I had for Krafchenko. I told him that I had been questioned by the chief of police and that I wanted him to tell Krafchenko to get out of town immediately if he had to walk out, and not to communicate with me at all. We talked for awhile. Bell was very agitated and did not appear to be himself at all. He left the hotel about nine o'clock, as I thought, to keep his appointment with Krafchenko. Half an hour later I learned that Bell had gone to the police station after leaving the hotel, and had told Chief McPherson how Krafchenko had threatened him and compelled him to aid his getaway. Bell told me afterward that he felt there was something unusual about my actions, and saw nothing else to do but tell what he knew.

This was an unexpected turn of events. Chief McPherson acted instantly, in co-operation with Chief Elliott, who was present when Bell gave his information. A patrol load of plain clothes men heavily armed was put in charge of Acting Chief of Detectives

George Smith and accompanied by Bell. The patrol was preceded by Chief McPherson, of the city police, Chief Elliott, of the provincial police, Deputy Chief Newton, Detectives Wm. Eddy and George Headon.

After Bell had pointed out the house the patrol was driven into the lane and stopped about one hundred feet west of the house. The plain clothes men immediately rushed out and surrounded the house and waited orders from Chief McPherson. Very little time was taken to accomplish the arrest. Chief Elliott, of the provincial police, Acting Chief of Detectives George Smith, Deputy Chief Newton and George Headon quietly went upstairs and knocked on the door of the room occupied by Krafchenko. Krafchenko, who was asleep at the time, woke up, expecting to meet Bell. He opened the door to look into the mouth of the officers' revolvers. It was a tense moment, no doubt, for all concerned. Rumors had been circulated that Krafchenko would shoot if cornered. But he must have recognized that the slightest move towards his gun, which lay on the dresser within three feet of his hand, would mean instant death. He raised his hands above his head and told them he would come quietly. Detective Headon entered the room, followed by the other officers. Krafchenko was ordered to dress. He was wearing only his sleeping attire when he opened the door. After dressing he was handcuffed and driven to the police station with Chief McPherson, Chief Elliott and Deputy Chief Newton, and thus ended the first chase after Krafchenko, the suspected murdered and bank robber. He was booked in on the charge of giving a revolver to a confederate, who was at that time serving three months for carrying a concealed weapon.

The reason for charging him with the minor offence was to give the crown lawyer time to collect evidence and prepare the case against Krafchenko. He was charged with murder and bank robbery later.

CHAPTER IX.

COMMITTED FOR TRIAL

At the preliminary hearing my evidence and Bell's proved to be the most damaging testimony against him, with the exception of Wm. Dyck's.

During the entire hearing Krafchenko maintained an attitude of bravado that was never shaken. He appeared to be working out some definite plan of procedure and acted as though he wished to have it over with.

The case for the crown was a masterpiece of circumstantial evidence gathered from thirty-five to forty witnesses. The testimony of these people dovetailed and interlocked one with the other so closely that Krafchenko was convicted by the public and the press before his preliminary hearing was three-quarters finished.

P. E. Hagel, better known around Winnipeg as Percy Hagel, a young but able lawyer acting for Krafchenko, did not cross question many of the witnesses, but sat listening and jotting down notes from the tightening chain of convicting evidence that was being forged by the legal hammer of W. H. Hastings, crown prosecutor.

The hearing came to a close at ten minutes past six o'clock on the 9th of January, 1914, and Krafchenko was sent up to stand trial on the charge of murder and bank robbery. He left the prisoner's dock with a smile.

Back of this smile lurked more than mere bravado. During his three weeks' incarceration in the cell known as the old kitchen, his cunning brain and versatile tongue had been busy planning the most daring escape in the criminal history of the Dominion. During the last two days of the preliminary hearing an automatic pistol rested in his pocket.

CHAPTER X.

KRAFCHENKO'S ESCAPE

On the morning of January 10th Winnipeg was awakened earlier than usual by the cries of the newsboys: KRAFCHENKO HAD ESCAPED. Intense excitement prevailed throughout the city.

The three newspaper offices were centres of activity, the huge presses roaring out their extras. Reporters rushed in and out tearing their way through crowds around the bulletin boards. Newsboys were fighting and scrambling for their bundles. These were golden days for the "kids." Never before had the newsboys made such a clean up in Winnipeg. For six weeks they wore the smile that would not come off. "Krafchenko" was a magic word to them. It meant a real Christmas dinner to many of these wide awake little hustlers.

Krafchenko when arrested was assigned to a large cell known as the "old kitchen." It had been used as the kitchen where the prisoner's meals were prepared, and later as a cell. The reason for putting him in this particular place was to give him room to exercise without letting him out in the corridors along with the other prisoners. He was constantly guarded by two constables during his confinement.

Krafchenko was always willing to talk to his guards when they would listen to him. He would entertain them with stories of his previous exploits, occasionally dropping a hint of buried treasure such as diamonds and jewelry that he had stolen and had cached away. He was carefully studying the guards all the time. One of these, Robert J. Reid, appeared to take a great deal of interest in his

stories and encouraged Krafchenko to talk. This was what Krafchenko wanted. He would not disclose the hiding places of his buried wealth, but he told Reid confidentially that if he could get out he would be willing to share generously with any one who would help him.

Percy Hagel, counsel for the prisoner, visited his client every day and sometimes in the evening. They always conversed together in the cell. The above facts and the story of Krafchenko's escape I am taking from the evidence given before the royal commission that investigated the affair.

Hagel and Reid met in the former's offices in the Builders' Exchange several times, and here, according to the evidence given by Buxton, a chum of Hagel's, the escape was framed up.

Krafchenko was to be supplied with a gun and a rope. Buxton had two revolvers in pawn. These he redeemed and gave one of them to Reid in Hagel's office. This gun was to be taken into Krafchenko by Reid, but Buxton, fearing the gun might turn up and be traced to him, if the attempt should fail, forced a young lad, for whom he had obtained a position in J. H. Ashdown's hardware store, to steal an automatic pistol for him. This he exchanged with Reid for the first one he had given him. Before giving Reid the automatic he filed the numbers off the barrel, in Hagel's office in the presence of Reid.

Buxton also bought a cheap clothes line which Krafchenko was to use. Hagel showed Reid how to carry the rope in his tunic so that it would not be seen when he was returning to duty.

According to Buxton's testimony, he had made arrangements with John Westlake to use the latter's suite in the Burris Block on Toronto Street as a hiding place for Krafchenko.

Reid was successful in getting the gun and the rope to Krafchenko without the knowledge of Constable Flower who was doing guard duty with him.

Krafchenko hid these useful articles under his bed clothes to wait for the proper time to make his break for liberty.

On the evening of January 9th, the day he was sent up to stand trial, Krafchenko was visited by Percy Hagel. Reid stated in his evidence before the Royal Commission that Hagel gave Krafchenko directions that evening, as to how he would get to Westlake's apartments when he got out.

Preparations had been made to the minutest detail. Everything now depended on Krafchenko.

At 2.30 o'clock on Saturday morning, January 10th, while the city slept, Krafchenko was pacing up and down the length of his cell, which was roomy, being about fourteen feet by sixteen. There were two doors, one leading to a closet, used as a toilet room, and the other to the corridor. An iron barred window looked out on the alley back of the station.

Krafchenko suddenly stopped in his walk. The apparent nervousness that he had shown during the night as suddenly left him. With the quickness of lightning, he drew the automatic from his pocket and covered his unarmed guards. With a smile that turned to a snarl, he said to them: "I'm going to leave here, boys, and I'll kill any one who tries to stop me. Go into that closet and don't come out or try to call for help for ten minutes."

Officer Reid, who had been waiting for Krafchenko to act, started to go to the closet. He was followed by Officer Flower, who was too dumbfounded by the suddenness of the daring act, to offer any resistance. Krafchenko, compelling Reid to throw the key of the closet on the floor, picked it up without taking his eyes off the men for a moment. He locked both guards in the closet. Then, taking a key from his pocket, which had been given him by Reid earlier in the night, he unlocked his cell door, which was secured with an ordinary house lock. Proceeding down th corridor to the photograph room, he entered this. The door had been left unlocked by Reid. Going to the window he took the clothes line from under his

clothing and tied one end to a fixture on the sash, he next raised the window and climbed through, starting to slide down the rope. This is where the plan partially failed. The rope, a thin cotton affair, broke before he had gone ten feet. It was fully forty feet from the window to the sidewalk on Louise Street; Krafchenko fell thirty feet, landing on the sidewalk stunned and bruised. He lay unsconcious for fully a minute. On regaining his senses he limped up the alley back of the police station to Main Street. He had twisted his back and sprained both his knees and an ankle in the fall. He was suffering terribly from his injuries. He saw the red signal lights calling the patrolmen to the telephone boxes and knew that his escape was discovered. Limping across Main Street he proceeded over to William Avenue. Going west on this street he was hailed by a crowd of joy riders who, noticing that he was hurt, invited him to get in the car with them. They, unsuspectingly, drove him to the Burris Block, where he said he lived.

How Krafchenko got to the Burris Block after breaking out of the Winnipeg police station was not known till after his capture, which was effected ten days later. He told the police how an automobile party had given him a ride. Strange to say this automobile was never located, and the police claim that it is just another of "Jack's fairy tales." He refused to make any statement regarding the parties who had helped him to escape.

CHAPTER XI.

SECOND CAPTURE OF KRAFCHENKO

After being locked in the closet by Krafchenko, Officer Flower wanted to blow his whistle, but was prevented by Reid, who was trying to give Krafchenko time to get a good start. Reid eventually had to give in to Flower, who smashed the door open and, rushing to the jailer's office, gave the alarm.

Deputy Chief Newton was the first man on the job. He immediately order the signal lamps to be flashed. In fifteen minutes every patrolman doing night duty on the different beats knew that Krafchenko had escapéd. Orders were sent out to stop every automobile and vehicle of any kind and look over the people who were riding. Anyone coming early to the city that morning would have thought Winnipeg had gone mad. Automobiles rushed through the streets carrying detachments of police to guard the different points where the fugitive might try to leave the city. Every stray rumor was run down by a flying patrol load of constables. For two or three days this kept up, but soon the chase settled down to one of wits.

Quiet rumors went the rounds among the police that Percy Hagel, who had been drinking considerably, had something to do with his client's escape. The first clue along this line was given by a pawnbroker, who told the police that Buxton, a chum of Hagel's, had redeemed two revolvers a few days before. This looked like something to work on. Buxton was detained and, after being questioned for two or three days, gradually gave information that led to the arrest of Reid.

Reid held out for several days and then finally confessed.

The conspirators had not counted on Krafchenko's crippling himself. Afraid to keep him in Westlake's suite, arrangements were made through an acquaintance of Westlake's to hide Krafchenko in the Security Storage warehouse, near the corner of Ellice and Sherbrooke Streets. This was just before Buxton's detention. The police visited the warehouse, but Krafchenko had been moved back to the suite in the Burris Block. While searching the warehouse a rumor was received from some unknown source that Krafchenko was in Westlake's suite.

Chief McPherson, in company with Deputy Chief Newton and a squad of picked detectives and constables, were whirled over to the Burris Block. Knocking on the door of the suite it was opened by Westlake who, at first, said he was alone, but finally admitted that Krafchenko was there, and pointed to a door indicating the room occupied by Krafchenko. Chief McPherson called to him, asking if he would "come quietly, or do you want a fight." Krafchenko's well-known voice answered, "Come in, I don't want to fight." The second nerve racking chase was over. He was taken to the provincial gaol, and this time locked in a steel cage used for condemned criminals.

Westlake was placed under arrest, and charged with assisting a prisoner to escape. Hagel was also taken in custody and charged with the same offence. Both were bound over to stand trial at the spring assizes.

Constable Reid pleaded guilty and was sentenced to seven years in the Manitoba penitentiary at Stony Mountain.

Percy Hagel and John Westlake were tried before Judge Curran and a jury at the spring assizes. This trial, on account of Percy Hagel's prominence as a lawyer, created as great a sensation as has any of the former stirring episodes connected with the dare-devil Krafchenko. When Krafchenko, as the mysterious man in black, startled the quiet village of Plum Coulee by shooting down the

bank manager, he set a series of events in motion which brought not only trouble and annoyance to many people, but which brought ruin and life-long disgrace to several homes. Through Krafchenko's lawless act in Plum Coulee bright and promising careers have been irretrievably ruined, innocent children's lives have been darkened and women's tears have been caused to flow in bitter torrents.

Hagel was sentenced to the penitentiary at Stony Mountain for a term of three years and Westlake was given a penitentiary term for two years.

Buxton, whom many people criticize severely, and who is held in approbation by a large portion of the public, will, it is said, be prosecuted on a charge of inciting a lad to steal.

Hagel and Westlake, handcuffed together and looking pale and ill, were taken to the penitentiary on April 14th by Deputy Sheriff John Pyniger. They did not give Pyniger the slightest trouble.

CHAPTER XII.

KRAFCHENKO SENTENCED TO DEATH

John Krafchenko was tried at the Morden assizes for the murder of Henry Medley Arnold at Plum Coulee on December 3rd, 1913. The trial began on March 18th and Krafchenko was found guilty after more than three weeks' continuous hearing.

I did not give my evidence until the trial had been under way for over a week. There were seventy-two witnesses for the crown and about nine witnesses were heard for the defence. It can easily be seen that the court did not lose much time, even if the trial did take over three weeks. All the witnesses, when they left the box, were impressed by the cheerful smile flashed at them by Krafchenko as they stood up to be sworn.

I, too, was greeted by a smile from Jack. I told my story, the truth in every detail, as well as I could remember each incident. I felt sorry for the handsome debonair man in the prisoner's dock with his feet shackled. If he was innocent it was a terrible array of evidence against him, of which my own was only an indirect link. If he was guilty it was still more regrettable to see him in such a tragic position.

The evidence piled up heavily against Krafchenko and, despite the earnest and able efforts of J. D. Suffield, his lawyer, a verdict of guilty was given. The court room was packed to the doors with a hushed and awe-stricken audience when the foreman of the jury uttered the fateful word. There was a gasp, and the long suspense was over. Krafchenko, the coolest man in the room, still smiled.

Two hours later the court again sat for the passing of sentence of

death on the daring but unfortunate bandit. He was asked if he had anything to say and, in response, stood up and made a remarkable statement. He admitted that he had been in Plum Coulee at the time of the murder but that there were three men engaged in the affair, and that it was not his hand which fired the fatal shot.

After his statement Krafchenko stood quietly while Chief Justice Mathers pronounced the dread doom which is meted out to murderers. There was an awful stillness in the room. His lordship's voice trembled and broke with emotion as he uttered the dreadful concluding phrase: "And may Almighty God have mercy on your soul."

Krafchenko was sentenced to be hanged on July 9th, 1914, in Winnipeg.

Krafchenko passed through this ordeal, as he had through so many others, with an iron nerve. He held his head proudly as he left the court room between the two uniformed mounted police officers.

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